

WATERSHED ACTION PLANS

The river basin plans required by statute are the central focus for public involvement in the development of strategies for water quality improvement and protection at the community level in watersheds throughout Vermont. Watershed Councils are established in each basin to insure a broad cross-section of public involvement. The two watershed coordinator positions approved by the General Assembly in 2004 have been filled and we now have watershed action plans under development in five watersheds in the Lake Champlain basin. In the Connecticut Valley, the White River basin plan was completed in 2003 and the plan for the West, Williams and Saxons rivers is under development.

ANR prepares a full report on watershed action planning to the General Assembly each year, which provides detailed information about activities in these watersheds. The full report will be available online from the DEC Water Quality Division home page www.vtwaterquality.org. Following are brief summaries of last year's progress, followed by a tabular summary of the action items tracked in each basin.

Champlain Basin

- The Poultney/Mettowee basin plan is in final draft form and should be adopted in the near future.
- The Lamoille River basin plan has been drafted and shared with communities throughout the watershed and received a largely favorable response. The Watershed Council is preparing a revised draft for public review and comment and should be starting the public process in the near future.
- The Otter Creek basin plan is in the early stages of development, with the Watershed Coordinator working with several watershed associations, planning commissions and other organizations in the basin to develop inventories, restorations projects and recommendations for waterbody typing and classification.
- The Northern Lake Champlain basin is composed of a number of smaller disconnected watersheds flowing to the lake. The Watershed Council agreed with the Agency and the Missisquoi River Basin Association that the Rock and Pike rivers would be best addressed in the Missisquoi River basin plan because these rivers, like the Missisquoi River, flow to Missisquoi Bay. Development of the basin plan for the remainder of the Northern Lake Champlain basin is underway.
- The Missisquoi River basin plan development began with the hiring of a new watershed coordinator in June and the opening of agency offices at the Northwest Regional Planning Commission in St Albans. The Missisquoi plan will include all the tributaries to Missisquoi Bay. The agency began seeking public involvement in plan development with six public meetings around the basin.

Connecticut Basin

- The White River basin plan was adopted by the Secretary in 2003 and submitted to the Water Resources Board for adoption to the typing and classification recommendations in the plan. Action on these recommendations is expected this year.

- The West, Williams, and Saxons rivers basin plan is well underway. Although the agency has been actively involved in this planning basin, the lead for this basin plan development is with the Windham Natural Resources Conservation District, using a grant from the agency to support their work.
- The Stevens, Wells, Waits and Ompompanoosuc rivers basin plan is in the early stages of development.

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Watershed Initiative Status for All Basins as of December 2004

Current Status by Basin

Components of the basin planning process	Basin 2	Basin 3	Basin 5	Basin 6	Basin 7	Basin 9	Basin 11	Basin 14
Public forums held	C	C	O	I	C	C	C	C
Watershed Council formed	C	C	C		C	C	C	C
Local WQ* concerns identified	C	C	C	O	C	C		C
Panel discussions on WQ issues held	C	O	O	O	C	N/A	I/O	C
Strategies for WQ issues formulated	C	O	O	O	C	C	I/O	O
Review of town plans and zoning regulations	C	I/C	O	I	C	C	I/O	O
Develop water management type classification proposal	C	I/O	I		C	C	I	
Meetings with towns on classification proposal	C	I/O			C	C		
Watershed plan draft	C	I			C	C	I/O	
Public hearings on draft plan	C					C		
Final basin plan	I					C		
Outreach to schools and local groups	O	O	O	O	O	C	O	O
Basin Assessment Report	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Phase I Stream Geomorphic Assessments	I/O/C	O/C	O	O	O	O	I/O	O
Phase II Stream Geomorphic Assessments	I	I/C	O	O	O	O	I/O	O
Bridge and Culvert Inventory	O/C	I/O		O	O		I/O	O
Dam Inventory	O				C	C	I	
Biological Monitoring	O	O	I	C	O	C	O	O
Restoration Projects	C&O	O		O	C&O	O	I	C&O

Key: I = initiated, O = ongoing, C = completed, WQ = water quality, Basin 2 = Poultney-Mettowee Rivers; Basin 3 = Otter Creek; Basin 5 = Northern Lake Champlain; Basin 6 = Missisquoi River; Basin 7 = Lamoille River; Basin 9 = White River; Basin 11 = West River; Basin 14 = Wells, Waits and Ompompanoosuc Rivers